



# NEW JERSEY FIELD OFFICE

## FIELD NOTES

### MARCH 2015



#### New Jersey State Wildlife Action Plan

By Eric Schrading

On March 24 the New Jersey Field Office participated on the Executive Committee for the State Wildlife Action Plan with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. The SWAP continues to develop and discussion focused on priority species, focal areas, and upcoming stakeholder meetings to solicit input from various user groups. Congressional District - All.

#### Red Knots and Oyster Aquaculture

By Wendy Walsh

On March 2 the New Jersey Field Office hosted a meeting of oyster growers, researchers, agencies, and environmental groups to discuss red knot monitoring at Delaware Bay oyster farms. With Service and State input, a Rutgers team will begin monitoring this May to support adaptive management of aquaculture operations. The shared goal of all partners is to minimize conflict between aquaculture and red knots during the birds' annual spring stopover in Delaware Bay. Congressional District 2.



Photo Credit: Eric Schrading, USFWS

[www.fws.gov/northeast/njfieldoffice](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/njfieldoffice)



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Photo Credit: Don Freiday, USFWS



Photo Credit: Eric Schrading, USFWS





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#### Controlling Stream Bank Erosion In Salem County

By Beth Freiday

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program assisted private landowner Bev Arnold, in controlling erosion on a stream bank on her farm in Salem County. The stream has been retired from agricultural use by NRCS' Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). To stabilize the banks and restore riparian habitat, we installed 210 dogwood stakes. Some of the live stakes were harvested from a bog turtle habitat in order to promote nesting success. Congressional District 2.

Photo Credit: Kristen Meistrell , NJ Audubon







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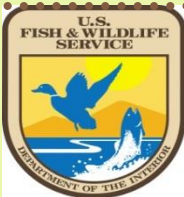
#### Working With Landowners and Partners

By Brian Marsh

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program (Partners) worked with landowners this month to plant live stakes of dogwoods and willows to stabilize streams and provide future habitat for migratory birds. Live stakes are an excellent way to help landowners quickly establish desired plant covers in riparian areas. For example, 275 live stakes were planted at Hudson Farm in Sussex County in our Highlands/Middle Delaware River Focus Area (Congressional District 5). Hudson Farm is a large private hunt club working with Partners on several projects: forest management for golden winged warbler; upland grassland (bluestem); wetland grassland (eastern gamagrass) for savannah sparrow; and other grassland dependent birds and restoration measures. Approximately 150 live stakes were planted at Ponderosa Farm in Monmouth County (Congressional District 7) to stabilize a berm along warm-season grass fields installed through Partners. Most of those stakes were red osier dogwood which provides high forage value to migratory songbirds in the fall. Another 125 were planted at the Ethos Farm in Morris County (Congressional District 11) to stabilize a stream and to create habitat for flycatchers and other wetland scrub-shrub/riparian species. Approximately 30 acres of warm-season grasses will be seeded at this property in the spring along with 1,000 bare root trees and shrubs, through a Partners project with the landowner and New Jersey Audubon. At Woodstown High School in our Delaware Estuary Focus Area (Congressional District 2), 225 live stakes and 150 bare root plants provided by Partners were planted this week by students with instruction from Partners staff. Partners is working with this high school, Natural Lands Trust, and the American Littoral Society, to create a natural discovery area on the school's grounds. Another 500 to 700 live stakes will be planted with our partners at other sites within the next couple weeks.



Photo credit: Steve Eisenhower, Natural Lands Trust



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Partners works to maintain relationships with several of the State's nonprofits such as the Natural Lands Trust (NLT), The Nature Conservancy, the American Littoral Society, and New Jersey Audubon. Some of these organizations own their own land where Partners may work, but more importantly the staff of these organizations are very active in local communities. They can often find and connect landowners with interest in restoration, with the Partners program to develop projects that target our priorities. The NLT is an organization active throughout our Delaware Estuary Focus Area (Congressional District 2). This month, Partners provided rough cut cedar lumber for NLT to make 20 kestrel boxes. The boxes will go up in our Focus Area and will be closely monitored and maintained by NLT and their partners.

Partners also provided cedar boards to the woodshop at Middle Township Middle School in Cape May County (Congressional District 2) in March. Eighth graders will use the boards to make approximately 32 wood duck boxes that will later be placed on properties in the Partners program. The students adopt wood making skills while learning about wood ducks and conservation. Partners also provided a purple martin gourd rack and houses to Hopewell Crest Middle School in Salem County (Congressional District 2). The students will closely monitor the purple martins, learn their behavior, and help band them through the help of the Purple Martin Conservation Association. Hopewell Crest Middle School is located in the Partners Delaware Estuary Focus Area, and is a site where Partners has helped establish native grassland and pollinator habitat, as well as scrub-shrub.

Partners worked at four bog turtle sites in March (Congressional Districts 5 and 11), to reduce stem density of speckled alder, poison sumac, red maple, and other woody vegetation. Numerous private properties in New Jersey have active bog turtle habitat. However, these wetlands are often unmanaged, leading to succession into red maple swamp that is too shaded to allow successful bog turtle nesting. Through written agreements with the landowners and coordination with the State and our Endangered Species staff, Partners is able to restore these sites to early successional habitat.



Photo credit: Beth Freiday,  
USFWS